



Tips for Hikers

Take the time to enjoy your outdoor experience. Binoculars will help you observe the plants and animals as you walk quietly along the trails. A camera will preserve your memories of your visit.

Carry water. Hellhole Canyon can be very hot and dry, and the only drinking water available is located at the staging area. For a full day's hike, you could need at least one gallon of water in moderate temperatures. Do not drink from the streams.

If you are planning a longer hike, **carry light trail snacks.** They will help maintain your energy level.

Wear suitable clothing and footwear. Sturdy shoes and a hat are indispensable, and sunglasses, sunscreen, and insect repellent are highly recommended. Weather conditions can change rapidly, so be prepared for extremes.

Tell a friend or family member about your hiking plans. Be specific about your route and what time you should return. Hike with a companion.

Stay on the trails. The natural resources of Hellhole are fragile. Their survival and your safety depend on correct trail etiquette. Don't cut switchbacks — proper trail maintenance depends on proper trail use.

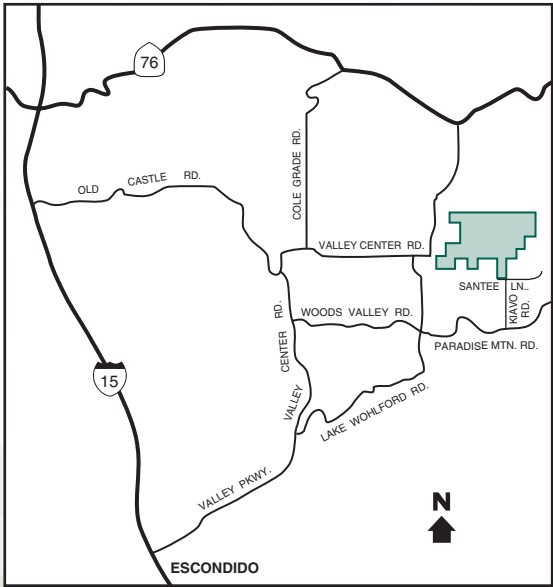
Carry a first aid kit. It can make the difference between an enjoyable hike and a potentially serious situation.

Hellhole is a wilderness area. Poison oak, bees, ticks, and rattlesnakes occur here naturally.

Preserve hours: 8:00 a.m. to sunset
Open Friday – Monday
Closed the month of August

Hellhole Canyon County Preserve

19324 Santee Lane
Valley Center, CA 92082



Other County Open Space Preserves:

Wilderness Gardens Preserve: Located at 14209 Highway 76, 10 miles east of I-15, Wilderness Gardens is a 735-acre preserve located in the Pauma Valley. The preserve has 4 miles of hiking trail, picnic tables, and the Pala Mill Historic Site. The preserve is open 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Friday through Monday. Closed Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. Dogs are not permitted.

Del Dios Highlands Preserve: Located at 9860 Del Dios Highway in Escondido, this 774-acre preserve straddles both San Dieguito and Escondido Creek watersheds, joining the communities of Del Dios and Harmony Grove. Trail use is open for hiking, mountain biking, and equestrian use. The preserve is open seven days a week from 8:00 a.m. to half an hour before sunset.

Santa Margarita County Preserve: Located on De Luz Road, in the community of Fallbrook, this 220-acre preserve offers visitors views of the picturesque Santa Margarita Valley. The trails accommodate horseback riding, hiking and mountain biking. The preserve is open seven days a week from 8:00 a.m. to half an hour before sunset.

Rules and Regulations for County Preserves

LICENSE: Horse riders must display a valid Pleasure Riding Trail License.

ACCIDENTS: The County of San Diego shall not be responsible for loss or accidents.

UNAUTHORIZED MOTOR VEHICLES: The unauthorized operation of motor vehicles is prohibited.

LITTERING: Is prohibited.

DEFACEMENT PROHIBITED: No person shall remove, deface, or destroy trail markers, monuments, fences, trees, camp or picnic structures, or other preserve facilities.

PRESERVATION OF TRAIL FEATURES: All wildlife, plant, and geologic features are protected and are not to be damaged or removed. All historical artifacts are to be left in place.

HORSES AND OTHER ANIMALS: No horse or other animal shall be hitched to any tree, shrub, or structure in a manner that may cause damage to preserve property. No person shall ride, drive, lead, or keep a horse, except in areas specifically designated for such use.

PETS: Dogs are allowed on a maximum six-foot leash. Please clean up after your dog.

NO HUNTING: No person shall use, transport, carry, fire, or discharge any firearms, air guns, archery device, slingshot, fireworks, or explosive device of any kind in a preserve.

ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES: No intoxicating liquors having more than 20% alcohol by volume are permitted.

FIRE HAZARDS AND SMOKING: No smoking. Campfires are prohibited. Stoves allowed only in primitive group camping area.

INFORMATION



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO
Department of Parks and Recreation
5500 Overland Avenue, Suite 410
San Diego, CA 92123
Reservations & Information:
Toll Free • (877) 565-3600
Local • (858) 565-3600

Visit us at www.sdparks.org

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Hellhole Canyon County Preserve



Welcome to Hellhole Canyon County Preserve

Hellhole Canyon is located approximately four miles east of Valley Center in northern San Diego County. For those seeking to explore a wilderness in transition, Hellhole offers a variety of outdoor experiences. Wildfires in 2003 and 2007 changed this natural landscape, providing hikers and horseback riders a unique view of the canyon’s reemerging plant and animal communities.

Facilities in this 2000-acre County preserve include a staging area, restrooms, parking for horse trailers, drinking water, an amphitheater and a primitive group camping area (available by reservation only). The canyon itself is crossed by 8.5 miles of hiking and equestrian trails. Benches and interpretive signs are placed along the trails.

Though Native Americans did not live in this canyon permanently, they did come here regularly to collect and grind acorns and gather other plant and animal resources. Settlers to the area around the turn of the century gave colorful names to features within the canyon, such as Hell and Paradise Creeks, Horsethief Canyon and Paradise Mountain.

Hell Creek Trail from the staging area heads downhill to Hell Creek. Flowing much of the year, the creek supports oak woodland and riparian habitats. A diversity of wildlife depends on this water source. As visitors continue past the creek, the topography opens up to reveal the watershed aspects of this large canyon. Evident on both sides of the canyon is the historic Escondido Canal. Constructed by hand in the late 1800s, it provided water from the San Luis Rey River to Lake Wohlford.

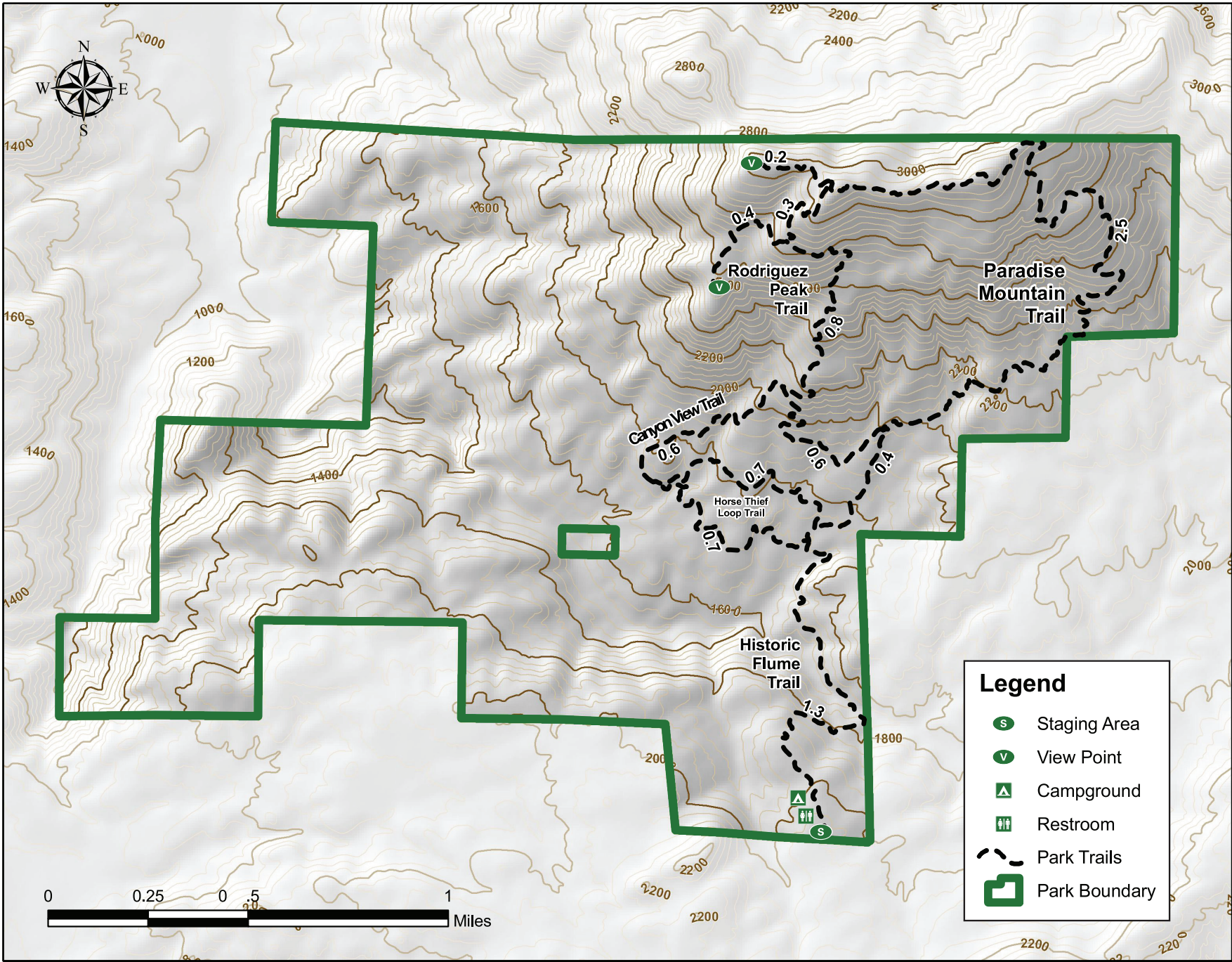
Hell Creek Trail continues to the west on the same route that the historic canal once took. Remember that your downhill descent also means a steep hike up on the way out.

Canyon View Trail and **Horsethief Trail** consist of two loop sections with a moderate elevation gain. Hikers and equestrians on this trail will discover hillside grasslands and open chaparral habitat. Hikers can choose either of these loops to observe the canyon from a higher vantage point. Wildlife, such as coyotes, raccoons, bobcats, and snakes are commonly observed in this area. The average hiker should have no problems on these trails.

Paradise Mountain Trail and **Rodriguez Peak Trail** are for the more advanced hiker. To minimize the severe change in elevation, we recommend hiking this loop in a counterclockwise direction. The south-facing slope is drier and more exposed to the sun than **Hell Creek Trail**, which is evident in the different vegetation community, chamise chaparral. There are two viewpoints near the summit, with **V1** offering a magnificent view of the San Luis Rey River Valley, and **V2** with a great view down into Hellhole Canyon.

A special note to preserve visitors: We ask that hikers and equestrians stay on the designated trails and obey posted signs. The habitat communities, plant and animal life have shown resilience and have begun to recover from the effects of wildfire.

NOTE: Bicycles are not allowed on trails within Hellhole Canyon County Preserve.



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